

**IN THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 Claim 1 (*Currently Amended*) A hand-operated animal waste scooper, comprising:

2 a control assembly comprising:

3 a handle;

4 a trigger attached between said linkage assembly and said handle;

5 said trigger being operable between an unpulled state wherein said linkage  
6 assembly is in an inactivated position and said jaws are in a closed position and a pulled state  
7 against spring pressure from said plurality of springs wherein said linkage assembly is in an  
8 activated position and said jaws are in an open position;

9 a latch attached between said handle and said trigger;

10 said latch being movable between a unsecured position when said trigger is in an  
11 unpulled state and a secured position when said trigger is in a pulled state, thereby holding said  
12 trigger against said spring pressure;

13 an extension structure attached to said control assembly;

14 a support structure having a plurality of bag clips, said support structure depending from  
15 said extension structure, and having an upper cross portion and a depending side portion from  
16 each end thereof, at least one of said plurality of clips being mounted on each depending side  
17 thereof;

18 a linkage assembly connected through said extension structure to said control assembly;  
19 ~~said linkage assembly comprising:~~  
20 ~~upper linking means;~~  
21 ~~an actuator extending between said trigger and said linking means;~~  
22 ~~a hinge pin extending between said depending side portions of said support~~  
23 ~~structure; and~~  
24 ~~a pair of opposed bell cranks, each said bell crank having an upper arm and a~~  
25 ~~lower arm having respective free ends and rigidly attached at about a right angle forming a~~  
26 ~~corner thereof, each said corner being pivotally mounted on said hinge pin, said upper arm~~  
27 ~~extending upwardly from said hinge said hinge pin, said lower arm extending outwardly from~~  
28 ~~said hinge pin;~~  
29 ~~said upper linking means being attached to and extending between respective said~~  
30 ~~free ends of said bell crank upper arm;~~  
31 ~~said upper linking means being attached at its central portion to said actuator;~~  
32 ~~a pair of guide rods extending between respective said opposing sidewalls of said~~  
33 ~~opposed jaws, each said lower arm being pivotally connected at about its free end with a central~~  
34 ~~portion of a said corresponding guide rod, at least one of said plurality of springs being~~  
35 ~~connected between said guide rods;~~  
36 ~~whereby, upon the pulling of said trigger, said actuator pulls the central portion~~  
37 ~~of said linking means upward relative to said hinge pin, thereby pulling said free ends of said~~  
38 ~~upper arms of said bell cranks inward toward one another as they rotate on said hinge pin, said~~

39 ~~free ends of said lower arms of said bell cranks rotating outward, thus moving said guide rods~~  
40 ~~outward against the pull of said at least one spring and thereby opening said opposed jaws~~  
41 ~~attached thereto; and~~

42 ~~whereby, upon releasing of said trigger, said at least one spring pulls said guide~~  
43 ~~rods together, thereby closing said opposed jaws;~~

44 a pair of generally scoop-shaped opposed jaws attached to said linkage assembly, each  
45 of said jaws having an upper containment portion, a lower grasping portion, and opposed  
46 sidewalls; and

47 a plurality of springs attached to said linkage assembly and between said jaws;

48 said control assembly comprising:

49 a handle;

50 a trigger attached between said linkage assembly and said handle;

51 said trigger being operable between an unpulled state wherein said linkage  
52 assembly is in an inactivated position and said jaws are in a closed position and a pulled state  
53 against spring pressure from said plurality of springs wherein said linkage assembly is in an  
54 activated position and said jaws are in an open position;

55 a latch attached between said handle and said trigger;

56 said latch being movable between an unsecured position when said trigger is in  
57 an unpulled state and a secured position when said trigger is in a pulled state, thereby holding  
58 said trigger against said spring pressure;

59 said linkage assembly comprising:

60           upper linking means;  
61           an actuator extending between said trigger and said linking means;  
62           a hinge pin extending between said depending side portions of said support  
63 structure; and  
64           a pair of opposed bell cranks, each said bell crank having an upper arm and a  
65 lower arm having respective free ends and rigidly attached at about a right angle forming a  
66 corner thereof, each said corner being pivotally mounted on said hinge pin, said upper arm  
67 extending upwardly from said hinge said hinge pin, said lower arm extending outwardly from  
68 said hinge pin;  
69           said upper linking means being attached to and extending between respective said  
70 free ends of said bell crank upper arm;  
71           said upper linking means being attached at its central portion to said actuator;  
72           a pair of guide rods extending between respective said opposing sidewalls of said  
73 opposed jaws, each said lower arm being pivotally connected at about its free end with a central  
74 portion of a said corresponding guide rod, at least one of said plurality of springs being  
75 connected between said guide rods;  
76           whereby, upon the pulling of said trigger, said actuator pulls the central portion  
77 of said linking means upward relative to said hinge pin, thereby pulling said free ends of said  
78 upper arms of said bell cranks inward toward one another as they rotate on said hinge pin, said  
79 free ends of said lower arms of said bell cranks rotating outward, thus moving said guide rods

80 outward against the pull of said at least one spring and thereby opening said opposed jaws  
81 attached thereto; and  
82 whereby, upon releasing of said trigger, said at least one spring pulls said guide  
83 rods together, thereby closing said opposed jaws;

84 whereby upon activation of said control assembly, said linkage assembly acts upon said  
85 pair of jaws, opening said jaws and upon installing an inverted plastic bag over said jaws and  
86 said support structure and secured to said bag clips, said pair of jaws covered by the plastic bag  
87 may be lowered over the animal waste, and upon deactivation of said control assembly, the bag  
88 supported by said jaws may be closed around the animal waste by action of said springs on said  
89 linkage assembly between said jaws, encasing the animal waste with said plastic bag and upon  
90 said bag being removed from said bag clips and pulled downward reverting the bag to its normal  
91 disposition, upon activation of said control assembly, said jaws may be opened, allowing said  
92 reversed bag containing the animal waste to be removed from the jaws of said animal waste  
93 scooper and disposed of without the hands of the operator or any part of the waste scooper from  
94 touching the animal waste.

Claim 2 . (Canceled)

1 Claim 3 (Previously Presented) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, wherein  
2 said extension structure comprises a hollow pole extending between said handle and said support  
3 structure.

Claims 4-5 (Canceled)

1 Claim 6 (Previously Presented) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, wherein  
2 said sidewalls of said opposed jaws overlap and said jaws are pivotally attached at the upper  
3 ends of their respective sidewalls to said hinge pin.

1 Claim 7 (Previously Presented) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, wherein  
2 said depending sides of said support structure having guide slots receiving the opposing ends of  
3 said guide rods, said guide slots being dimensioned and oriented so as to guide and limit the  
4 travel of guide rods through their inward and outward movement corresponding to the closing  
5 and opening of said opposed jaws.

1 Claim 8 (Previously Presented) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, further  
2 comprising a linkage shield having a horizontal plate suspended from spaced hangers, said  
3 spaced hangers being mounted on said hinge pin between said scoop opposed sidewalls, said  
4 linkage shield forming an horizontal barrier to avoid said bag or its contents from entering said  
5 linkage.

1 Claim 9 (*Previously Presented*) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, said upper  
2 linking means comprising a pair of upper links pivotally connected at said actuator at a common  
3 end and pivotally attached at their opposed ends to said upper free ends of said opposed bell  
4 cranks, respectively;

5 whereby, upon pulling of said trigger and said attached actuator, said upper links extend  
6 upward at their central common ends, thus pulling said free ends of said bell cranks inward  
7 toward each other and thereby opening said opposed jaws.

1 Claim 10 (*Previously Presented*) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, wherein  
2 said springs are mounted between said guide rods at points adjacent the inner side of said scoop  
3 sidewalls.

1 Claim 11 (*Previously Presented*) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, in said  
2 handle having an upper horizontal grip and opposed side rails at each end thereof, having a  
3 vertical portion extending vertically downward and an angled portion extending inward, forming  
4 a generally D-shaped opening, said side rails joining at said extension structure at its upper end,  
5 said vertically extending portion of said side rails each having an inner facing guide rib  
6 extending therein.

1 Claim 12 (*Original*) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 11, wherein said trigger  
2 is generally D-shaped and fits within the lower portion of said handle D-shaped opening, said  
3 trigger having a horizontal grip and opposed side rails at each end thereof, having a vertical  
4 portion extending vertically downward and an angled portion extending inward, said side rails  
5 joining at the upper end of said actuator and connected thereto, said vertical side rail portions  
6 having slots therein slidably engaging said side rails and guide rib of said handle.

1 Claim 13 (*Original*) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 12, wherein said handle  
2 grip is of a half-round shape with the flat side oriented downward, and said trigger grip is of a  
3 half-round shape with the flat side oriented upward and disposed such that, upon pulling said  
4 trigger grip upward, the mutual flat sides of said handle grip and said trigger grip come together.

1 Claim 14 (*Previously Presented*) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 13, wherein  
2 said latch comprises a hook installed on said trigger grip and an eyelet installed on said handle  
3 grip so located that said hook can engage said eyelet when said trigger grip is pulled against said  
4 handle grip.

1 Claim 15 (*Previously Presented*) The hand-operated animal waste scooper of claim 1, wherein  
2 said lower grasping portions of said opposed jaws are formed by open frames.